

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. today issued the following statement after a jury convicted four top aides to Mayor Richard Daley for hiring campaign workers to city jobs in violation of a federal court ban on patronage.

"This may be the first step in cleaning up the waste, fraud, abuse and corruption that have made Chicago infamous. This verdict sends a message that corruption is no longer an acceptable way of life in Chicago City Hall and Illinois politics," Jackson said.

"I congratulate the U.S. Attorney for his commitment to serving the public's interest, and for standing up for taxpayers whose rights were systematically and callously trampled by clout and machine influence.

"These are some of the mayor's closest friends and political allies. The mayor cannot have it both ways. He can't boast about being a hands-on mayor who guides the city that works, yet simultaneously claim to be unaware or naive about the corruption and criminality that is occurring within his Administration and multiple city departments," Jackson said.

As for the continuing speculation about Jackson's potential run for Chicago mayor in 2007, Jackson said: "I have not made a judgment relative to the mayoral race next year. My priority now is to build an economic engine that would create jobs and opportunity for residents of the South Side and south suburbs.

"I have worked for 10 years to put together an innovative plan that will solve Chicago's aviation capacity crisis and create jobs for citizens who need and deserve them. That continues to be my No. 1 priority," Jackson said.